

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I heard the Republican leader on the floor just moments ago talking about the dismissal of some individuals by the Biden administration and their replacement, and his complaint that this violated the norms and the precedents of the U.S. Senate.

There are certainly two words I would offer in response to that assertion: Merrick Garland.

I would offer those words to the Republican leader as a reminder of what he did when there was a vacancy on the highest Court in the land, the U.S. Supreme Court. Antonin Scalia passed away, and a vacancy occurred. It was the last year of the Obama administration.

Tradition suggested that that President of the United States, duly elected and in office, had the responsibility and the opportunity to fill the vacancy, and so he offered as his nominee Merrick Garland from the DC Circuit court.

What happened to Merrick Garland's nomination? What was the norm and precedent? Well, there would be a hearing and a consideration of that nomination and a vote in the U.S. Senate.

That process was stopped in its tracks by one leader, the Republican leader of the U.S. Senate from Kentucky.

So when he talks about norms and precedents and creating and filling vacancies, he has forgotten that he made history in a very unusual way: by violating the most basic norm and precedent that the U.S. Senate had the responsibility to fill a vacancy on the Supreme Court. And the President of the United States, duly elected, was not a lameduck in the last year of his administration.

The second issue which was raised by the Republican leader this morning dealt with the phrase "defunding the police." I have rejected that phrase from the first time I heard it. I couldn't imagine anyone thinking that this was a sensible policy to follow when it came to the security of our homes and our communities.

I can't speak for anybody else in the Senate, but in the awful circumstance when one is called on to dial 911, you certainly hope that the police will answer and that they will be there if they are needed. Defunding them lessens that possibility, and I am not a person who supports that.

I want the very best police and law enforcement. I want them well trained,

and I want them to follow norms and conduct that are respectful of American values. But defunding the police is not something I have ever embraced or ever will.

But it is interesting to hear that argument from the Senator from Kentucky. He said that, in a way, you would be insulting and attacking the police by taking that position. One could argue that, but I would suggest to him that, in his position, stopping the creation of a commission to investigate what happened in this Chamber on January 6 and what happened to 140 members of law enforcement in the Halls of the U.S. Capitol on the same day is not respectful of the police itself.

We have had a plea—a direct plea from the men and women in uniform who guard us in this building to have an investigative commission determine what was behind that insurrectionist mob of January 6 and what we need to do to avoid it in the future. That commission and its prospects were stopped cold by the Republican leader from Kentucky. That is a fact.

In terms of being respectful of law enforcement, allowing that commission to be created—a bipartisan commission—to get to the bottom of that horrible incident, that embarrassing incident in the history of the United States, is the least we can do to respond to what the police who guard us have asked for.

I might add one other element while we are on the discussion of law enforcement and protecting America. We have a special security supplemental appropriation that was created by Senator PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, which appropriates the funds to pay the National Guard units who left their families and came here to protect us, and to pay the Capitol Police for the expenses they incurred on January 6 to fortify this Capitol against any future insurrectionist mob. That supplemental appropriations bill, which should have been passed routinely weeks ago, is still languishing for lack of agreement on the Republican side.

If you want to be respectful of law enforcement, whether they are men and women in uniform, in police units, or the National Guard, wouldn't you pay them for the services they have rendered to protect this Capitol and to protect the United States of America?

I call on the Republican leader: Instead of making a speech on the floor, call the Republican ranking member on the Senate Committee on Appropriations and ask him to waste no time in showing respect for law enforcement and to pass that security supplemental.

NOMINATION OF KENNETH ALLEN POLITE, JR.

Mr. President, on another topic, this week, the Senate will vote on the nomination of Kenneth Polite. President Biden has nominated him to serve as Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

As an experienced prosecutor who has served his community throughout his career, Mr. Polite is certainly qualified for this important position. From 2013 to 2017, Mr. Polite served as the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana. While in this role, Mr. Polite's office prosecuted several large, violent, criminal organizations. He held local corrupt politicians accountable and stopped more human traffickers than during any prior U.S. attorney's term in office.

Prior to serving the people of Louisiana, Mr. Polite served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of New York, which is a very busy and important office. There, he took on organized crime, fought corruption, healthcare fraud, and identity theft.

In addition to his extensive experience as a public servant, Mr. Polite also has a remarkable personal story. Born to teenage parents, he spent his youth in public housing projects in New Orleans before moving to the Lower Ninth Ward as a child. He graduated high school as the valedictorian of his class, and he went on to earn his undergraduate degree from Harvard and his law degree from the well-respected Georgetown University. After law school, Mr. Polite initially went into private practice, but he was inspired to become a prosecutor after his half brother was tragically killed by gun violence.

Throughout his career, Mr. Polite has always given back to the community that raised him. He has served on the boards of numerous community organizations and schools in New Orleans, and Mr. Polite's track record as an even-handed public servant has earned him support from across the aisle.

In 2011, he was appointed by a Republican Governor of Louisiana, Bobby Jindal, to serve on the Louisiana Civil Service Commission.

Then, last month, the Republican Attorney General of Louisiana, Jeff Landry, publicly voiced his support for Mr. Polite's nomination to this position in the Department of Justice. In a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee, Mr. Landry wrote that, while serving as U.S. attorney, "Mr. Polite was not only an effective crime fighter, but he was also an invaluable member of the community."

Mr. Polite is an outstanding nominee for this critical role at the Justice Department. You should have been in the Judiciary Committee, which the Presiding Officer serves on, when his nomination came up. The praise that he won from the two Republican Senators of Louisiana is an indication of this man's popularity and of his value to Louisiana and to our country. I hope that he will receive the same broad bipartisan support in the full Senate, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Mr. Polite's nomination.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, last week was an important day for literally millions of Americans because the child tax credit